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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE FIFTIETH SESSION

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Letter dated 20 July 1995 from the representatives of Belgium, Burundi, Cape Verde, Djibouti, France, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Monaco, the Niger, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia and Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 13 (e) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation".

An explanatory memorandum (see annex) and a draft resolution (see appendix) in support of the above request are attached to this letter, in accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

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ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

1. By its resolution 33/18 of 10 November 1978, the General Assembly granted the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC) observer status in the Assembly.

2. Uniting 44 countries and Governments that use the French language, ACTC is the sole intergovernmental organization representing the French-speaking world. It is the expression of a new solidarity and is an additional means of bringing peoples closer together through a permanent dialogue between cultures and respect for the sovereignty and cultural identity of its members.

3. In addition to the forum for dialogue and South-South and North-South cooperation that it provides, since it brings together countries and Governments of Africa, Europe, America and Asia (nearly one out of every four countries in the world), ACTC engages in multilateral cooperation among its members in areas of interest to the United Nations, including the following:

(a) Law in the service of development and democracy (legal and judicial cooperation, protection and promotion of human rights, support for democratic processes and parliamentary and judicial institutions ...);

(b) Education and training;

(c) Culture and communication;

(d) Technical cooperation and economic development (particularly in the fields of energy, environment and scientific and technical information).

4. As part of its activities, ACTC has entered into relations and concluded agreements with a number of agencies of the United Nations system; these agreements have resulted in cooperative activities in the countries members of ACTC, especially in the following areas:

(a) Observation of elections;

(b) Strengthening of national and regional institutions in support of the democratic process;

(c) Promotion of human rights;

(d) Promotion of the rights of the child;

(e) Economic development;

(f) Environment;

(g) Energy;

(h) Literacy campaigns;

(i) Support for educational systems;

(j) Protection of heritage.

5. Moreover, through its political organs, namely, the Francophone Conference of Heads of State and Government, the Ministerial Conference of French-speaking Countries and the Permanent Council of French-speaking Countries, ACTC promotes and supports the participation of its member countries in meetings and conferences organized under United Nations auspices. These include the following:

(a) World Summit for Children (New York, 1990);

(b) United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992);

(c) Meetings of negotiating groups on desertification and climate change;

(d) World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993);

(e) Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994);

(f) International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994);

(g) World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1994);

(h) Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

6. The Heads of State and Government that use French as a common language, meeting in Grand-Baie, Mauritius, in October 1993, adopted a special resolution on the French-speaking community and international relations, in which, after having reiterated their solidarity and their firm desire to join efforts to build a better future for their peoples and the international community, expressly affirmed:

(a) Their firm commitment that they share with other international bodies efforts to find appropriate solutions to the major political and economic problems of today's world;

(b) Their determination to develop, within these bodies, as well as at major international conferences, an ongoing in-depth dialogue among the nations of the French-speaking world;

(c) Their support for activities to ensure that the French-speaking community maintains a dynamic presence in international affairs, within the framework of a new partnership with all the organizations that make up the United Nations family.

7. It was from its policy of openness and wish to cooperate with international organizations, in particular with the United Nations, that ACTC opened, in 1991, an office at the United Nations Office at Geneva, which provides:

(a) A place for meeting and dialogue for French-speaking delegations participating in the many meetings organized by the United Nations in Geneva;

(b) A base for French-speaking countries that do not have a permanent mission in Geneva;

(c) A place for maintaining liaison with the United Nations Secretariat and partner specialized agencies.

ACTC recently opened a similar office at United Nations Headquarters in New York, which also has the task of maintaining liaison with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

8. Sharing the same ideas and pursuing the same objectives of peace, stability and development, the United Nations and ACTC are carrying out complementary activities in a number of areas of common interest. These activities must be strengthened and better coordinated for the benefit of the countries members of ACTC and, by extension, all States Members of the United Nations. To this end, close and regular working relations between the two organizations are advisable.

APPENDIX

Draft resolution

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 33/18 of 10 November 1978, by which it granted observer status to the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation,

Recalling also that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve cooperation in solving international problems, in particular those of an economic, social and cultural character,

Further recalling that the Charter of the United Nations provides for the establishment of regional arrangements or agencies whose objectives and activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Noting with appreciation the desire expressed by the Heads of State and Government of the French-speaking countries at their Fifth Summit, held at Grand-Baie, Mauritius, from 16 to 18 October 1993, to contribute actively to the solution of the major political and economic problems of today's world and to begin a new partnership with all the organizations that make up the United Nations family,

Considering that the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation brings together a considerable number of States Members of the United Nations that use French as a common language, among which it promotes multilateral cooperation in areas of interest to the United Nations,

Convinced of the need to coordinate the use of available resources to serve the common objectives of the two organizations,

Affirming the need to establish cooperation, or strengthen such cooperation if it already exists, between the two organizations in areas of common interest,

1. Registers with satisfaction the support expressed by the Heads of State and Government of countries that use French as a common language, for United Nations activities and their desire to begin a new partnership with the organizations of the United Nations system;

2. Welcomes the involvement of the countries that use French as a common language, through the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, in United Nations activities, in particular the preparation, conduct and follow-up of world conferences organized under United Nations auspices;

3. Takes note of the complementarity of the activities of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and the United Nations, as well as the programmes and other organizations of the United Nations system;

4. Invites the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, to promote cooperation between the two secretariats by encouraging meetings that enable their representatives to consult one another on projects, measures and procedures that will facilitate and expand cooperation and coordination between the two organizations;

5. Urgently requests the specialized agencies and other bodies and programmes of the United Nations to cooperate to this end with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session;

7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session an item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation".